

LETTERS
OF
THE MARCHIONESS
OF
POMPADOUR.
VOL. I

LETTERS

OF

THE MARSHALLS

OF

THE MARSHALLS



Printed
SLIP
POT

LETTERS
OF
THE MARCHIONESS
OF
POMPADOUR:

From 1753 to 1762 inclusive.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

DUBLIN:

Printed for J. EXSHAW, H. SAUNDERS, W.
SLEATER, D. CHAMBERLAINE, J.
POTTS, J. HOEY, jun. and R. MONCRIEFFE.

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THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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U O E A I M O

IN TWO VOLUMES



James J. Thompson and H. Thompson

P R E F A C E.

THAT the author of the following letters was daughter to a wealthy butcher of Paris, whose name was Poisson, and who gave her the finest education; that her accomplishments natural and acquired attracted the addresses of Mr. Normand d'Etiolles a farmer-general, whose heart and hand were easily accepted; that she now moved in a sphere which drew a more dangerous notice, bestowing, with the title of marchioness de Pompadour, for twenty years the guidance of France; and that she ended a life of languor at the age of 44, in the year 1764; are anecdotes either discoverable from her letters, or immaterial to whoever can taste them.

Nor is it material to premise that the translator of these letters purchased the authenticated copies of the executor to the marchioness's secretary, who died lately at Amsterdam, and -who, for whatever reasons of delicacy, had forborn their publication. The letters will best evince their own authenticity; which they who can,

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and they who cannot, understand, have equally no occasion for inferior evidence.

Many of the personages addressed can still doubtless produce their respective originals, which, however singly excellent, could not to any be of so much value, as to him who had alone the opportunity of amassing all the treasures that enriched such a number of different correspondents.

While the several letters so adapted to subject and object, throw at once light and shade on each other; while collectively they speak a knowledge of public affairs with a capacity of directing them, inapplicable to any other than the author they claim; they account in some degree for her political influence in Europe, and prove no less pleasing than authentic memoirs of that portion of the history of France.

Nor does it appear that our fair author finished any other memoirs, which in one letter she promises as posthumous, though none could do her more honor, or the world more service, than these genuine delineations of a manly soul, which, as herself compliments a favorite friend, may sometimes inhabit a female person. In

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these therefore he that runs may read, her ardor for her country, her fondness for her friends, her zeal as well as ability to promote merit and patronise genius, to provide for the unprovided, and to protect virtue.

But, as the epistolary, next to the colloquial, is the most natural manner of expanding one heart, and improving another; of conveying ingenuity and exciting it, letters have one advantage over conversation, that each may be a permanent no less than perfect masterpiece of art, without ceasing to be the occasional and unquestioned offspring of nature.

These epistles thus, as easy as ever flowed from human pen, are each perhaps as accurate a little essay as, without shadow of method, ever took the epistolary form; nor, though visibly unintended for the public eye, are they the less impregnated with native wit, or less sweetened with delicacy of sentiment. No wonder then if their stile be easy as it is natural, and elegant as it is easy; if each letter be a model in matter and manner, with due allowance to patriot-partiality; nay if the very turn of the original remain with the thought, unviolated in the version.

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If the French letters prove such patterns of wit and of writing; and the translations be found faithful pictures of them, either the French or the English may suffice to those who read only one of the languages: but if mutual translation be, as experience has shown it, the best means of improving any two tongues, learners have perhaps no better instruments of facilitating either in question, than these familiar epistles in both languages.

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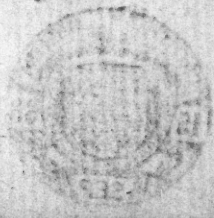
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~~NECESSARILY A SEPARATE PEOPLE FORMING
A STATE TO THEMSELVES
AND THEREFORE
A SEPARATE NATION~~

LETTER I.

To the duke of MIREPOIX. 1753.

IT is no secret to you, my lord-duke, that your letters always give me pleasure. I dearly love the trifles you chose and sent me, for the sake of the chooser and sender: other merit they surely have none. The English can neither eat, nor live, nor work with taste. I sincerely pity you for being doomed to live in the country of roast-beef and insolence. You must doubtless be still more exposed than we, to the wretched quibbles and wranglings of those proud islanders. They plainly are for war, and only want a plea. But the greatest crime they impute to France, is that of restoring her marine.

The procedure of the British parliament in naturalizing the Jews, astonishes all Europe. The old marshal says that the religion, laws, and manners of the Israelites, render them incapable of being either good citizens or good subjects: they are

necessarily a separate people, forming a state within a state; to whom, therefore, no privileges should be granted, but with great discretion. Gold, which like love, puts all men on a level, is supposed the most cogent argument the Jews have employed on this occasion. France has long known that precious metal to be almighty in England, and that there every thing has its price; peace, war, justice, and virtue. You are much pleased with the politeness of king George's ministers; not so are we with their politics. They have, like cardinal Mazarin, one great drawback on negotiation: their constant aim is to deceive. Take care they do not succeed, and think of your country and friends.

L E T -

[3]
LETTER II.

To the same.

1753.

IN spite of all our hopes and promises, in spite of all the lies of the court of London, we look upon a war as unavoidable; but without the least alarm. The hearts of all the Indians are ours; we have stout ships, a strong army, and good friends. Lord Albemarle, who minds his pleasure more than his politics, has, however, presented a long memorial, complaining, that at the instigation of the French, the American savages have begun to attack his nation. It is a sad thing that so solid a people cannot make itself beloved, and shameful to complain of such incapacity. This memorial deserved no serious answer, and has had none. The said ambassador has also complained that France should be building ships: a complaint, which merited and met with just as serious an answer as the other. The king relies upon your zeal, your lights, and your vigilance, in this critical juncture: read, mark, learn every thing. The English are not very cunning: I do not

think they will over-reach you. I beg
my compliments to the dutchess * : she is
a lady I love for her wit and good-nature :
qualities alike rare in her country, but so
much the more valuable. Farewel, my
lord-duke ; take care of your health for
the service of the king, and the comfort
of those who love you. I have a notion
that we shall quickly meet again, I should
be both glad and sorry, for I do not like
war ; it never does much good, and al-
ways does much evil.

I am, &c.

* — of Queensberry.

L E T.

LETTER III.

To the lady of the marshal d'ETREES.

1754.

MORE and more do I perceive how piteous is the condition of kings and of the great: I absolutely believe a groom happier than his master. How dear-bought are the pomp, the glory, and all the gaudy gewgaws, which the vulgar world is stupid enough to envy! For my part, I shall own to you, that I have not had six pleasant moments since I have been here. Every-body strives to please me, and almost every-body displeases me. The most sprightly conversations give me the head-ake; I gape in the heart of entertainments, and constant experience teaches me, that vanity has no happiness; yet the cup, bitter as it is, I must swallow, since I have taken it. The king is well, but he tires like other folks; and the squabbles of the clergy with the parliament, conduce nothing to his good-humour. The ministers strain hard to make up matters; but the priests will not

bate a hair's-breadth. I cannot, however, imagine their confession-tickets to be so very necessary, or that God will banish an honest man his presence, who dies without their passports. I persuade myself, on the contrary, that they are, for the most part, vain, ambitious, bad subjects to their king, and bad servants to their God. But their credit is, unfortunately, so high, for the sacredness of their character, and the fair cloke of religion, that one feels ones-self obliged to keep measures with them. The king is duly sensible that the parliament maintains the rights of his crown against the clergy, who want to be independent; yet he finds himself, in a manner, forced to punish his friends, and to caress his enemies. Such is the case of those gods of the earth, adored at once and despised. These quarrels affect not you, my dear friend, remote as you are from the scene; but me they do afflict, because they afflict the best of kings. Pray we God to pour into his ministers the spirit of peace and charity. Have you seen our count*? I charged him with a small commission: he is

* The count of Valbelle.

excellent at those little things ; after that I have another to give him of the like importance : I know his talents, and must employ them : talk to him. I embrace you tenderly.

B 4 L E T

LETTER IV.

To Mr. BERRIER.*

LET us have no talk of thanks, sir : had I known a more proper person than you, I should have recommended him. Express your gratitude to the king, by doing better than your predecessors ; that will be the finest compliment, and the only one I expect from you. Great integrity, and great talents, are, especially at present, indispensable, for an employment of such importance ; and for this reason have you been chosen. Some there are who pretend it impossible for France to have a good marine, or long to preserve it ; nay, they tell you it might produce a revolution in the government ; that at least the royal authority would suffer from it ; that a great marine, and great trade, which is the consequence of it, suppose the liberty of the subject, as
in

* Who had been lieutenant of police at Paris, then controulor-general, and at length secretary of foreign affairs.

in a mixt monarchy like England, or in a republic like Holland. Were that the case, there were not a syllable to be said. I should not be overjoyed to see the king descend from his throne, and from absolute master, to become the first slave of the state. Do you think, sir, that the French are made for liberty, or that those fine reasonings are reasonable? It appears to me a bad excuse for former ministers, and cannot be a good one for their successors. Proceed, therefore, sir, with zeal, and make the French name respected in either sea. Your department is the most important, as the most difficult: the master at sea is master at land. You will wonder that a woman should talk of all that; but my situation is singular in every thing, like my fortune. I have found more than once that women may be in the right, and give good counsel; your elevation is a recent instance. In the name of God and of France, do yourself honor, and me. Farewel, sir, I wish you as good success, as your enemies and mine wish you a bad one.

I am, &c.

LETTER V.

To Mr. DIDEROT.

SIR, I can do nothing in the matter of the *Encyclopedia Dictionary*; that book is said to contain maxims contrary to religion and the king's authority: if so, the book should be burnt; if not so, the calumniators. But unfortunately your accusers are ecclesiastics, and they will not be in the wrong. I know not what to think of all this; but I know what to do, and that is to do nothing: priests are too dangerous antagonists. Meantime every body speaks well of you, esteems your merit, honors your virtue. On these testimonies, so glorious to you, I believe you almost innocent, and shall rejoice to oblige you in aught else. The proscription of the *Encyclopedia*, is a point resolved upon the deposition of the devotees, who are not always the most upright or most authentic evidences in the world. If the book is not such as they pronounce it, I cannot but pity you, and detest hypocrisy and false zeal, till you afford me a happier opportunity of doing you service, &c.

LET-

LETTER VI.

To the marchioness of BRETEUIL.

March, 1754.

I OWE you an answer, and make it with much pleasure. You see that in a country not famed for memory, I do not forget my friends. There are some people pleased to represent me as a haughty interested woman, incapable of tasting and loving merit. You know how far such verdicts are just: but I own that they grieve me, because I know them unjust, and perhaps would grieve me more, knew I them otherwise: for in such case, truth provokes more than falsehood. I am not haughty, for I live familiarly with those I value: as for others, I take no pleasure in vexing or displeasing them. I cannot be deemed interested, since I spend so much money, often to oblige my enemies, and oftener the ungrateful. Nor am I incapable of loving merit, tenderly as I love you, and ardently as I seize every opportunity of giving you demonstrations. Very happy I am

am to have now found a new one : but do you know, madam, that I am monstrously angry? How dare you mention to me the vacancy about the queen? Do you fancy yourself ever out of my head? I ought to punish you, by concealing from you what has happened : but my heart, which I always consult, will not let me. I inform you therefore that you were named to that place, before I received your letter. I will not tell you who the person is that proposed you, and has succeeded in it. Know only that it is a person wholly yours, and who will receive no compliments. I believe it may be proper for you to come quickly and thank the king, as well as embrace me.

You will see here a tall raw-boned fellow *, black as a devil, hating, like Charles the twelfth, women and pleasures, but fond like him to distraction, of war and glory. He did us much mischief in the last war, and is come with an offer of his services, to do as much to the English on the first occasion, which will come perhaps but too soon. I here conclude

* Monsieur Courtin, a famous partizan.

clude in order to go to supper, and then
to the spleen. Farewel, my fair mar-
chioness: love every body, but me
most.

L E T.

LETTER VII.

To the countess of BRANCA S.

YOU made me laugh with your little bishop; is it indeed true that he could amuse himself in his coach with sticking patches on the face of the fair dutchess? I do not take that to be an episcopal function; but it is a pleasing one, and much were it to be wished, that priests never did more harm. But leaving the *reverend father in God*, let us talk of ourselves, my dear friend. Do you love me still more than you did last week? For my part, I find I love you more and more every day, and that your affection is become to me indispensable: I languish when I do not see you. Let those miscreants, who pretend that women cannot love one another, come to us, and learn: I have many acquaintances, many most humble servants of both sexes, whom I see without pleasure, and quit without regret. There must be a good heart, a sprightly wit like yours, to please me. The king is gone a hunting in the most outrageous weather; he laughs
at

at it, he has a case of iron. As for the puny lords that are made of chewed paper, it is quite another thing with them. But they must follow their master, and make the best of it. During that time, as one must do something, I saunter in my gallery, gaze at my pictures, yawn, and write. Do not you think me very happy? Voltaire's new tragedy has been performed here? It is amazing that old fellow should still be getting children so beautiful and so vigorous. He is a none-such, that Voltaire: nobody has more the knack, even at this day, of making one either laugh or cry.

Do, pray, Madam, bring me your little daughter; I will kiss her, and will marry her for you, if you please. I dearly love her, because I dearly love whatever belongs to you and resembles you. But I hear a noise: some impertinents come to carry me to a petty supper, and oblige me to break off my letter and my pleasure. To-morrow I hope to resume them.

Getting out of bed, I begin with wishing you a good morning. I foresaw I should have the spleen yesterday, and guessed right. How wondrous well contrived are the decorums of the world!

The

The company did not please me : they were very civil, very insipid people, whose flatteries made me sick. They laughed at all the fine things I had not said, and would persuade me in spite of my heart, that I wanted to shine among them. Take my word, my dear, all flatterers are fools that imagine others like themselves. There were also some fine women, who seemed to say to the men : *Here is my face, admire it.* What torments, my dear countess, are those petty suppers that are thought so pleasing and delightful ! I am almost convinced that there is hardly a person present not stifling a yawn, when every one is crying out, what joy ! For my part, I there have none : but in compensation, I never fail to catch a hearty spleen and a good head-ake. Such is the pleasant life I lead, and which I wish to all my enemies. There is no public news ; but a world of private adventures, intrigues, and meanesses. I still hear those who tattle them to me ; but I despise them, and they no longer divert me as formerly : which makes me hope my heart mends. Why do you not bid me have done ? I can well suppose my letter long enough, though not for myself who love to write to you,

yet

yet at least for you whom I am tiring.
 Let me now read it over. Strange!
 what stuff! I find in it but one thing that
 you will approve: the marks of friend-
 ship I give you. All that part is good
 and genuine. As for the rest, I would
 advise you not to read it, had you not
 already done so.

I am, &c.

T E L

LETTER VIII.

To the duke of MIREPOIX. 1755-

YOU are, my lord, a charming correspondent for a woman: but we are afraid you may not be watchful enough over the motions of the English. It seems evident that they have some great design in view: they are making vast armaments in all their ports, they are transporting to America troops and stores of every kind. Yet we think it extraordinary that you should be constantly repeating in all your dispatches, that the king of England is still our good friend, and has no ill intention against us. You know better than I that the whole secret of politics consists in lying properly, and that kings can tell lies like other men. It were shameful that in those matters a Frenchman should prove the dupe of the English; and I am greatly afraid of your being so, unless you keep well on your guard, both for your own reputation and the honor of your friends. There is, for instance, a certain general Braddock, who has commenced hostilities in America:

it

it is impossible he should have dared to act without orders: and if he has received any, you see that your good friends of England are knaves, and laugh at us. Things cannot remain as they are: we shall quickly know what to depend on. But in the mean time I dread your returning abruptly hither, with the shame of being outwitted in politics by the worst politicians upon earth. Did that happen, I should be much grieved, as well on your account as my own; for you know with what zeal I have ever been and shall ever be disposed to serve you. I salute you with all my heart: take care of your glory and our interests.

I am, &c.

L E T.

LETTER IX.

To the same. 1755.

YOU have at last deceived us, my lord-duke, by having first been deceived yourself; but it seems strange that you should have been so. How is it possible that the king of England should have given an order so unjust and worthy the age of Attila, without your having conceived the smallest suspicion of it? Two men of war and above three hundred merchant-ships seized in the midst of peace, and without declaration of war! After that, boast again the justice and humanity of the English. The king was amazed, and the whole nation is provoked: no mortal would ever have believed them capable of commencing war like the pirates of Algiers. Our ministers are very sensible that all their representations to the court of London will be to no purpose: robbers do not take to restore. Yet it is a procedure indispensable to the glory of our sovereign, to keep up the forms of justice even with the unjust.

unjust. Europe will then see with
astonishment his moderation, and the
guilt of his enemies.

LET-
land. Inform yourself with address of
their deliquis, of their negotiations with
the princes of the continent, of their re-
lances, schemes, &c. Every body is
the English; the number of their ships,
you an exact state of the naval force of
what we can. Do not fall to bring with
love it not; be sure as it is, we shall do
French. It may even be said that they
the sea does not seem the clearest of the
is a sea war we are going to have, and
without measures; nor is it a question of
dence of our ministers, the king is not
notwithstanding the promises and con-
the English: God grant it may be. Yet
fool and insistent to make head against
marine is said to be on a pretty good
of success, we have nothing to fear. Our
of this war, but it is to come to the end
here. I know not what may be the event
London, and we hope to see you presently
I you can no longer stay, they decidedly re-

LETTER X.

To the same. June, 1755.

I THINK with your excellency that you can no longer stay decently at London, and we hope to see you quickly here. I know not what may be the event of this war, but if fortune take the side of justice, we have nothing to fear. Our marine is said to be on a pretty good foot, and sufficient to make head against the English: God grant it may! Yet notwithstanding the promises and confidence of our ministers, the king is not without uneasiness; nor is the nation. It is a sea-war we are going to have, and the sea does not seem the element of the French. It may even be said that they love it not: be this as it will, we shall do what we can. Do not fail to bring with you an exact state of the naval force of the English, the number of their ships, of their sailors, of their troops by sea and land. Inform yourself with address of their designs, of their negotiations with the princes of the continent, of their resources, schemes, &c. Every body is persuaded

persuaded that we shall have the superiority by land, and of this there is all the likelihood in the world; so that whatever losses we may sustain by sea, the continent will make us amends; and the worst that can come will be such a peace as that of Aix-la-chapelle, by which all the powers, after being drained of men and money, found themselves pretty nearly where they had set out: for the time of making conquests is past. It is supposed that king George has found himself forced to take this violent step so derogatory to his honor: the merchants of London, by their credit, their money, and their clamors, lead their monarch by the nose, and oblige him to make war, whatever be his inclination for peace. You see, my lord-duke, there are inconveniences every where: in absolute monarchies, kings can do what ill they please; in mixt monarchies, they cannot even do good. On our part let us endeavor always to do it, by loving and serving our sovereign and our friends.

I am, &c.

L E T-

LETTER XI.

To the dutchess of AIGUILLON. 1755.

I GRIEVE with you for the death of Mr. de Montesquieu: he was a great man and a good citizen; highly worthy to be your friend. I imagine the Sorbonne will leave his ashes at rest: it is a cowardly and an unworthy action to attack the dead. Father Castel boasts of having made him die a good christian before. For my part, I think all persons of honor and merit are such, though by being more modest, they make less noise than others, and are free alike from prejudice and from fanaticism. The king esteemed that illustrious personage, and was touched with the loss of him. His petty performances, *the temple of Gnide* and so forth, were my delight. As for his *spirit of the laws*, I had neither time, nor perhaps capacity to read it: those profound perusals suit but few women. He is said to have left in your hands some interesting papers; I doubt not of your communicating them to the public, when time shall have afforded some abatement

to your grief. The manner in which you mourn your friends, shows how worthy you are to possess them. I have the advantage of being in the number, and this is one of the blessings that I value most. If I can be of any use to you on this occasion, deny me not, madam, the pleasure of obliging you, &c.

VOL. I.

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LET.

LETTER XII.

*To the dutchess of CHAROST.** 1755.

YOU ask me, madam, what we are doing at Versailles: we are talking politics, we are beating the English; we are sometimes thinking of peace too. As your heart is fond of those topics, and my head is unfortunately full of them, let us have one quarter of an hour's friendly chat; after which, my fair dutchess, if your head akes, you shall go to the play.

To begin then, I must tell you that the king is of a peaceful temper, he has never forgot the lessons his great grandfather gave him on that subject, when he was but a child. Yet he finds himself this day forced to draw the sword, in order to vindicate his honor and that of his crown. Were you to read in any history these words: "and the king of
" that people seized and confiscated to
" his own use and service three hundred
" ships

* Lady of honor to the queen.

" ships of a neighbouring nation, who
 " was carrying on her trade at sea under
 " the protection of treaties; and all the
 " men found on board were loaded with
 " irons and cast into dungeons:" you
 would immediately ask whether this did
 not happen among cannibals; never
 dreaming that it was the humane king of
 a humane people that atchieved the glo-
 rious deed. It seems as if the savages of
 England had a justice, like a religion,
 of their own, which stops not their mo-
 dest mouths from calling upon general
 justice. One would think however those
 fearless good folks embarrassed at the very
 first step: they are making a strange
 pother in the north, to stir us up enemies,
 and defenders for the territory of Hano-
 ver. That same sweet country of Hano-
 ver puts me in mind of what Mr. de
 Maurepas said jocularly one day, that it
 was doubtless in friendship to the French
 that the English had set the illustrious
 house of Hanover on the throne, and
 taken for their king the last of the nine
 great vassals of the holy Roman empire.
 Till then they might almost hug them-
 selves that they had nothing to fear, but
 the fall of the firmament. But now they
 must come and fight upon land to defend

the desarts of that miserable electorate: they must exhaust themselves by continental wars and alliances, till at length they sink under the weight of their debts and losses. The king is resolved to set the English an example of justice and moderation. Restitution of our ships will be demanded, and upon refusal, the recourse must be to the last argument of kings. It is believed the Dutch will accept the neutrality that shall be offered them: their treaties with our enemies are binding only in case of invasion, and we have no thoughts of invading their island: there are other places enough where they may meet with their match.

Farewel, my dear dutchess, I am at the end of my politics: those matters do not over-much become a fine woman. But for me, who am almost past my days of pleasing, any occupation is proper, so it keep me out of languor, and afford me an opportunity of obliging those I love.

I am, &c.

L E T.

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LETTER XIII.

To the marquis of ALBRET. 1755.*

YOU have given us a piece of good news; this conversion of the prince of Hesse is a miracle of grace and policy: thus God, in his unsearchable Wisdom, makes sometimes use of human means to work supernatural wonders. That good prince could never have turned catholic more seasonably for us or for himself. The English will blaspheme, and we shall bless heaven. But they say that the old duke, who is a devotee in his old faith, beholds with no great pleasure the late conduct of his son, and it is feared may render it fruitless. After all, will not the young prince be master upon his father's death? and who can then compel him to sell his conscience to the enemies of his new religion? The English, and the fox of the north will doubtless make noise enough, and will not fail to urge the important plea of the protestant religion,

* Ambassador at Vienna.

though to hint it by the way, religion does not lie very near their hearts. But we must let them be bawling, and improve every mercy of Providence.

I have you always in mind, my dear marquis; and beg of you to be persuaded that I shall let slip no opportunity of obliging you, faithful servant as I know you to the king and your friends, &c.

LET.

LETTER XIV.

To the count d'ARRE. 1755.

THE negotiation of the English in Russia was already suspected here, and our ministers appear not much alarmed at it. What can king George do with the fifty thousand barbarians he is bidding for? Besides, we have other views here, and an equal wager might be laid that the czarina will break, before six months go about, her treaty with king George. We are no longer in the days of lasting alliances, and the interests of the princes of Europe change now almost every new moon. We expect however that the prince of Hesse, since he must sell his troops, will sell them to honest buyers: who can hinder him? We are always much pleased with you, and with the dispositions of the Dutch towards us. If they had any distrust, the king is readily disposed to put Dunkirk into their hands till the peace, as a pledge of his honor. If they refuse it, and rest satisfied with his word, they will do him justice; and

that will prove their having no bad opinion of us.

I had already heard of the fine *Memoirs of the marchioness of Pompadour*, which are vending in Holland. I suppose with you that they come originally from England, full as they are of palpable falshoods, of the grossest blunder and abuse. The English are incapable of writing: they have more passion than reason. Be this as it may, were it possible to suppress that sweet book, I should not be sorry, for my own sake and for the sake of truth, which should in all things be regarded. True it is that none but Englishmen and footmen can either read or credit it: but it is disagreeable to prove the pastime of Englishmen and footmen. See, dear ambassador, what is to be done, and what can be done. I must however thank you for your letters and correspondence: nothing can be more entertaining to me, or more useful in my present situation. The king has a constant esteem for you, who have served with zeal and success in a very critical juncture: be assured you shall have no reason to repent it. The Dutch ambassador speaks highly of you, and says that you have in his country the reputation of a man of honor, and
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tisf
do,
it.

of a great minister: which is very lucky
for the king's affairs, and gives great sa-
tisfaction to all who wish you so well as I
do, and neglect no occasion of showing
it. &c.

C5

LET-

LETTER XV.

To madam DUBOCAGE.

WITH much gratitude do I own the pleasure I received in the poem you sent me. If the discovery of Christopher Columbus had not eternised his memory, your verses would render him immortal. You make him in love, as Eneas with his Dido. All that is gallant and natural: love is the passion of great men, and prompts them to merit glory, provided it turn not their head. Never was, I believe, Columbus so sweetly sung, or by so fine a mouth. You make him moreover an excellent christian; and so he wants for no kind of merit. I know not what our good friend Voltaire will say: he has somewhere asserted, that women are capable of doing whatever men do, and that the only difference between the sexes is that ours is more amiable. I am tempted to believe him in the right, especially after reading your *columbiad*; and I can well imagine him jealous; for I have observed above a thousand verses that

that he must wish to have written. Afford me, pray, madam, an opportunity of obliging you, and of expressing how truly

I am, &c.

LET.

LETTER XVI.

To Mr. ROUILLE.* 1756.

YOU know, sir, the king's resolution, and must doubtless comply with it. I grant that the step is rather mortifying and unnecessary: the English have not seized our ships to restore them. Private persons, it is true, sometimes have remorse; kings never. Write however to the minister Fox: that word is equivalent to *renard*. I wish he may not act like one. If the king is denied justice, all Europe will learn it with indignation, and we may take vengeance on pirates, with a certainty of being approved by all people and princes, who understand the laws of public equity and honor. Let your letter be moderate, but strong, and worthy the sovereign you serve. Mr. d'Afri writes me word that the English ambassador at the Hague takes great pains to convince the Dutch that they are bound to act against us, and himself takes no less

* Minister for the marine.

to convince them of the contrary; nor is it improbable that he may be better heard, having justice and reason on his side: The *honest gossips* of Henry IV. are too wise to embark in a war, whence they could bring neither honor nor profit. They remember besides, that the last cost them pretty dear, and so it is not thought they will depart from the sage resolution they have taken. Meantime, sir, in your department, which is without dispute the most delicate, omit no means of keeping fair with *Mynbyrs*: assure them in all your dispatches and instructions of the king's esteem and friendship. Those little compliments are nothing in themselves, and yet produce always good effects. The marquis of Louvois made twenty enemies to Lewis XIV. by his haughtiness and insolence towards foreign princes. Let us be ever modest, but without meanness and without cowardice. Farewel, sir; I think and speak always well of you.

LET.

LETTER XVII.

To the marshal duke of BELLISLE.

March, 1756.

YOU see, marshal, that the cockneys of Paris, in their idle chat, may sometimes give good hints, and good counsels. You approve the expedition of Minorca, and indeed it will be comical to go to a place where the English so little expect us, instead of going to London, where they so dread to see us. I do not know king George's ministers: but those folks have certainly lost their senses, and are become supremely ridiculous. They know not what they would be at, or what they would not be at; and instead of preparing to attack, as being the aggressors, they dream only of defending their country against an invasion which they fear, but which they ought not to fear at least till after a long unsuccessful war. Every body allows Mr. de la Galissoniere to be the fittest man for commanding the Toulon-fleet; and besides there is no great danger: thanks to
the

the profound wisdom of the English ministry, there are no enemies in the mediterranean. The duke of Richelieu has been recommended for the siege of Portmahon. That man thinks himself fit for every thing, presents himself to every thing, and obtains every thing. He is a bold bufler, and a good fpeaker; he is beloved and employed. God grant he may fucceed, though many people would be both furprized and forry! You have good reason to fay that the fituation of the poor prince of Hefle is unlucky. The Englifh by their intrigues and the fanaticifm of his own fubjects, have compelled him to fell them his troops. With this affiftance and their Hanoverians, they will have an army in Germany; which will be commanded, they fay, by the Duke of Cumberland: a general, who never beat any thing but a handful of Scots, and who will, I hope, be as great in Germany, as he was in Flanders during the late war. It is affured that our good friend the king of Pruffia is on the point of accepting the money proffered him by the Englifh for fighting his own battles: nor did he ever act any other part. It muft be owned, marshal, that a very odd war is preparing. There was a private quarrel between
France

France and England, and that spark shall kindle Europe. One would think justice and probity were made only for the people: princes set themselves above them. Continue me your lessons upon these wretched politics, since, by the oddity of my fate, I am obliged to take part in them, and so to know something about them. The king has great confidence in your judgment, and the nation beholds you with reverence. Direct us in these critical times, and fulfil our hopes, &c.

L E T.

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LETTER XVIII.

To the lady of the marshal d'ETREES.

March, 1756.

BELIEVE me, my respectable friend, it is not my fault that the marshal has not the command of the Minorca-expedition. But those who have much art, prevail generally over those who have only much merit. The duke of Richelieu has promised every thing, and for every thing his word has been taken. However, this is a small matter, of two months at most. The marshal will be employed on another still more important occasion. He is destined to command an army in Germany, and will have to do with an old acquaintance, the duke of Cumberland, whom I fancy he does not much fear. Count Saxe called that same duke a gascoon who never kept his word : in fact, he had promised *to come to Paris in 1745, or to eat his boots* : he did not come to Paris, he did not eat his boots, and yet we still look for him.

I was

I was much grieved for the death of your niece: a young person so handsome and so virtuous, deserved a longer life, if indeed life be a blessing, which I am far from thinking it. I conceive and partake the pain such a loss must have cost you: why can I afford you no consolation? We hope to see you soon at Versailles. This I desire more than any body for your own interest and my peculiar satisfaction. I salute you, madam, tenderly, and beg to be believed that I think of nothing but of serving and loving you, &c.

I. E. T.

LETTER XIX.

To the duke of Boufflers, 1756.

I RECEIVED this morning a beautiful and important letter from you, and then another from Holland, in which I am told that the English have been proclaiming a general fast to bring down the blessing of God upon their arms. I know not whether fasting be good for winning battles: but I do know that, in order to please God, we must not commit injustice, or pretend to make him partner in our crimes. I shall not fast for the prosperity of France; but I shall recommend her to the justice of heaven and to the arms of our soldiers. Marshal Turenne used to say that God *was ever for the largest squadrons*. Wherefore, as heaven is deaf to the prayers of the weak, we shall take care to have a good army, and to put at its head a more than match for the duke of Cumberland, who is to be sent against us, as we are assured. I sincerely pity the poor prince of Hesse. His conversion will be of use to none but himself: which is matter of regret. I
am

am charmed to learn the success of your negotiation: it will appear strange to all Europe; but it is necessary, and consequently natural. Your Germans seem not incapable of hearing reason: may God keep them in their good way of thinking, and give you all the health needful for serving your country, and getting us friends, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R XX.

To the count TRESSAN. * May 6, 1756.

WITH much pleasure have I read your letter and your fine verses: for which I would thank you, did I deserve them. I knew that you excelled in prose, but was till now a stranger to your talent for the language of the Gods and of flattery. You are however a charming flatterer: one can neither believe you, nor be angry with you. What you say of king Stanislaus is true and touching: he is a great man, because he is beneficent and humane. He bears upon his countenance, like his worthy daughter, the stamp of virtue. The Lorrains adore him, strangers admire him, and wish, but vainly wish, that their masters resembled him. Every time I have seen that good prince, I have been struck with a veneration, which is doubtless the natural tribute the wicked themselves pay to virtue. I have always had a high
esteem

* Commandant in Lorrain.

esteem for the marchioness of Boufflers, and so am duly sensible of her remembrance: I pray you, count, pay her my civilities and tender her my service.

They say the king of Poland has a dwarf that is a prodigy, and performs a thousand sprightly tricks, though he cannot be made to comprehend that there is a God. I wish I saw him; but as that is impracticable, I must not think of it. Do, pray, tell me something about him the very first opportunity. I most cordially embrace the countess and your pretty children. Be well assured that I shall not forget you, whenever my remembrance can be of any service, &c.

L E T.

LETTER XXI.

To the marquis de la GALISSONIERE.

May, 1756.

I AM greatly obliged to you, marquis, for your attention, and charmed with your victory over the English, both for your sake and ours. The sea-gods are not accustomed to defeats on their own element: but you will bring them into the practice. Come, sir, and enjoy the glory with the rewards you deserve: nobody will see you with more pleasure than myself, who am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXII.

To the count of STAREMBERG.

June, 1756.

MR. Rouille has presented to me the honor of your letter. For you I have all the esteem that is due to the minister of a great queen, whose confidence you have earned by your integrity and abilities. The zeal with which you exert yourself to promote the important negotiation at present on foot, will gain you the gratitude of your country and of France. Three hundred years have the august houses of Austria and France been enemies. The cardinal of Richelieu augmented the breach; their interests had divided them, and their interests are about to reunite them. Never would Charles VI. who hated France so mortally, have imagined that his daughter could make alliance with her. But this new system, however extraordinary, is just and natural, because it is necessary; and so that prince would have approved it. As for the success of our arms, it is in the hands

hands of providence: but if heaven protect justice and good faith, it will declare for us; and, as we must help ourselves, we shall exert all our efforts to serve our friends and to confound our enemies. I have the honour, &c.

VOL. I.

D

LET.

LETTER XXIII.

*To the countess of BRIENNE. **

July, 1756.

MY dear friend, we are all in joy; you must partake it. The attempt upon Minorca was at first counted rash: now it has succeeded, it is construed a presage of new successes, and a thing entirely natural. The marquis de la Galissoniere has scattered the English fleet, and the duke of Richelieu has taken fort St. Philip by storm. Those are happy events, to which we are not accustomed in our naval wars with the English, and therefore the more pleasing and the more important. Our soldiers showed an astonishing intrepidity and passion for glory. Marshal Richelieu finding that riot and debauchery were killing him great numbers, and making vast havoc in the army, gave out in orders, that whoever should

* Lady to the count of that name, of the House of Lorrain, and master of the horse.

get drunk for the future, should be denied the honor of mounting the trenches, that is, the honor of having his head broke. This menace made such impression on those brave fellows, that thenceforward not a soul was seen in liquor. *Where is the point of honor going to settle?* would Moliere have said. The city of Paris is about to make great rejoicings; and, for my part, I shall do my best. They have brought me a very pretty song of Collet upon this conquest; I have given him fifty louis-d'ors, and the king a pension of four hundred livres. Every body should be happy, poets not excepted, in the public joy. Tell if you will, the great man, that he may come and see me this week, provided he be entertaining, and make me laugh. Farewel, my dear friend, I kiss your fair hands, and your little daughter, &c.

D 2

L E T.

LETTER XXIV.

To the duke of BOUFLERS. 1756.

THE accounts from Saxony have grieved the king, and made me shed tears. You write to me that the court of Vienna is provoked: I well believe it. The dauphiness is inconsolable. Is it so then that christian and civilized princes make war upon each other? That king of Prussia, whom our Voltaire has called, I don't know why, *the Solomon of the north*, who writes in so humane a stile, and acts in such a cruel one, has then forced the archives of Dresden, in spite of the queen who defended in person their entrance, and has dragged that princess to chapel, to hear *Te Deum* sung for the heroic exploit! Is it in this age of politeness and philosophy that a king, who would pass for a great man, could offer an affront so insulting, and so unavailing, to a woman, to a queen, who had nothing but tears and distress to defend her? We all here tremble for her health: the great soul of a princess of the house of Austria must suffer much, amid
such

such indignities and humiliations. We sincerely deplore the fate of that illustrious house; but I hope our tears shall not be barren, and that they will produce an illustrious vengeance: of this you may assure all our friends, &c.

D 3

LET-

LETTER XXV.

To the count d'AFRI. 1756.

YOU are a most successful ambassador, who have never any but good tidings to send us. I am delighted with your Dutchmen: they have then flatly refused the six thousand men. That measure speaks their wisdom, and sets us at ease. It is not thought however that the affair would have been carried with so much facility, if the old stadtholder had been yet alive. He was an Englishman at heart; he had an English consort; and the great power which the late revolution had given him, would have been an object of apprehension. But he is dead, his son is a child, and the Hollanders understand their interest: I am very glad of it for their sake and for ours.

I do not know that huge German * prince, who talks so familiarly of me, and knows me so very well. I never had any great connexions with the Germanic

* Mr. de Reischach, imperial minister in Holland.

body,

body, and still fewer with German coxcombs. If however he will at any rate be acquainted with me, and boast my acquaintance, we must even let him. You see that all fops are not in France.

The Swiss have received orders to hold themselves in readiness to march into Germany, and behold they murmur. It is astonishing that they should always make the same demur, when ordered to pass the Rhine. The late king had well accustomed them to it, but they have lost the practice. Besides, if they serve well, they are paid well. Marshal Noailles used to say, that they had gained more louis-d'ors in the service of France, than they had lost drops of blood. You who are yourself a Swiss, will believe no such thing: but however exhort your countrymen to become reasonable; you will doubtless have as much influence over their minds, as you have over those of the Dutch.

The pictures you have brought me are excellent, particularly the Paul Veronese. The king admired them first, as was but fit; and others now admire them in their turn. But by what chance come those masterpieces into Holland, to be sold like bales of silk by tasteless merchants? I

thank you for your attentions, and desire you to continue them. You should be glad, you say, to make a trip to France upon your own affairs. The king would readily indulge it; but he does not think that tour would suit the present situation of his affairs. Stay a little longer, and be assured that I shall not slip the very first opportunity of doing you pleasure.

It is proposed to contract with the Dutch for warlike stores; the difficulty will not be to find merchants, but to negotiate the whole with due prudence and secrecy. I can easily believe the Dutch nation to be fond of the neutrality, which has been offered her and accepted. A state that sets greater value on money than on glory, has ample fund of satisfaction, while her neighbours are worrying and wasting each other. The Hollanders partake the success of the victors, without sharing the risks or the losses of the vanquished. What can that Mr. de Reischach be, who writes to me? I know not why mr. de Reischach thinks of me: yet I shall answer him with politeness, because his prince is a friend of ours.

How do you pass your time among those honest Dutchmen? Do they know how to live agreeably? Can they laugh,
make

make merry, forget their cash a few moments? I should think life must be very tiresome in that country; and am sorry for it on your account, unless you like business better than diversion, which is very rare and very commendable. I salute your excellence cordially, and ever recommend to you the king's affairs, &c.

LETTER XXVI.

To the countess of BASCHI.

January, 1757.

My dear friend,

I Beseech you to come instantly and see me: my mind is in the most dreadful situation. I am surpris'd, confounded, desperate: afford me, if possible, consolation and counsel. A monster disgorged from hell, has just committed the greatest, boldest, and most atrocious crime upon the most amiable of men and best of kings. That good prince, who ought to be adored by all the world, has been stabbed by a villain, as he was stepping into his coach for Marli. At the first rumor of the execrable attempt, I fly to the apartment of the king, who was already conveyed into bed. I arrive breathless, distracted, and am preparing to enter: but find myself repulsed in spite of my cries and threats; so that I have been obliged to return to my own apartment in despair. I tremble lest the wound
should

should prove mortal; for all my friends forsake me, and here am I alone in tears. Alas! I weep not for myself, but for that dear prince: I would give my life to save his. In the name of God and of our friendship, run, inquire, inform yourself of his condition: take pity on your friend, &c.

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 Our dear marshal must therefore
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 return, but crowned with laurels, and
 crowned with the public esteem, which is
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LETTER XXVII.

To the lady of the marshal d'E' TRÉES.

August, 1757.

I Sincerely felicitate you, madam, on the glory which our friend has acquired: my friendship for you, and esteem for him redouble the joy I feel for his victory. The duke of Cumberland was ever unfortunate against marshal Saxe, and has succeeded no better against his best disciple. But in the midst of my joy, I feel a real grief to see that his command is taken from him in the very moment of his triumph. A man, whom I do not like, as full of ambition as of vanity, has insinuated that the war went on too slowly, that it might have been terminated in one campaign, and that himself was the hero to whom heaven had reserved that exploit. That is the man who is about to succeed the brave d'Etrées, to the astonishment of France and of her enemies. Our dear marshal must therefore return, but crowned with laurels, and crowned with the public esteem, which is
more

more than sufficient to indemnify great men for the loss of particular favor. Yet can I not forbear pitying France, who, I fear, will lose much by his retirement. Besides that motive which renders me so affected by his disgrace, my tenderness for you is a new ground of sorrow, when I think of that which you experience. Be comforted, my dear friend; you see I am not all-powerful: I have not so much as been consulted in the affair, else you well conceive that things would have turned out otherwise. Your virtue and courage will set you above the injuries of fortune. As for me, I shall do all in my power to change her, and shall ever be your sincere friend, &c.

LET.

LETTER XXVIII.

To the marshal de SOUBISE.

November, 1757.

YOU need not justify yourself to me, but to the king and to France, who are amazed and incensed at this unhappy affair at Rosbach. A beaten general is always a bad general in the opinion of the public. The Parisians particularly are frantic: they have committed a thousand insolences at your door. Such are the sweets of my situation, and what I gain by serving my friends. However the king still esteems you, and I believe you will preserve his favor; but you will lose your command. Many are the faults imputed to you. They say the king of Prussia laid a snare for you, and that you blundered into it. It belongs not to me to judge of those matters; but methinks I may say without blunder, that a battle is a game where losers are almost always counted blockheads, though often

often perhaps unjustly. I hope, marshal, that on another occasion you will shew what you can do, and will force your enemies to admire you, and those of your sovereign to fear you. Meantime I cannot forbear telling you that the war having been hitherto successful, it is a sad thing both for you and for the nation, that fortune should have begun with you to turn her back upon us, and that you should be the first to make us shed tears. Yet lose not your courage: your friends will be faithful and effectual, depend upon it. I did want to scold you a little to vent my spleen: I am possibly in the wrong, and those who blame you still more so. Come, and prove before all France that you have done the duty of a general at Rosbach, and that this defeat is the fault of fortune, not yours: it will be the first pleasure I shall have tasted since the news of that woful battle. I salute you with all my heart: take comfort, hope, and be well. I am very angry with your prince Hilburghausen: that man appears to have much presumption and little capacity. He was the first to demand

demand battle, and the first to fly:
 The fox he thought to catch, has been
 more cunning than he. I hate him,
 I believe, still more than the fox,
 &c.

L E T-

L E T T E R XXIX.

To the countess of BASCHI. 1757.

T H E R E is no news at present, but we expect some daily: God grant it may be good! I shall tell you only that I love you always; but that is no news. They say Damien died like a hero, and endured the most dreadful of torments with an extraordinary constancy: where may not courage be found? That villain was made for great crimes. It is also said that before he went to the Greve*, he eat a couple of partridges, and drank a bottle of wine, considering all the preparations for his execution as if they had been made for another. It must be owned that there are great resources in the heart of man, and that he can suffer much without a shudder. It was apprehended that wretch might have some hidden accomplices, who might attempt his rescue.

* The principal place of execution at Paris.

rescue. The guards and the king's household were under arms. I do not know whether all that parade was necessary, unless to render his execution more solemn, and to strike greater terror.

Do you know that poor Baviile is dead? Every body regrets him, except his wife, who in like case will surely be regretted by nobody. But she laughs at it: she does not even pretend to cry. She is in perfect good humor, and appears as indifferent about the death of that honest man, as if she had lost only a pair of gloves. In truth, there are some very extraordinary women, and who make me blush for my sex.

Will you be so good to take the trouble of visiting for me the collection of Mr. de Renecé? for I have not time. I am told he has some excellent pictures of the greatest masters: I shall rely on your judgment and taste, if I take a fancy to buy.

We are now very lonely: every body is in the army; and in that the war, so horrible in other respects, proves a blessing; as delivering us from a mob of low cringing monkeys whom one cannot love, but who must be borne.

I except

I except two or three who are not monkeys, and who may be esteemed as men of merit. Farewel, my dear; come and see your friend, and embrace her on either cheek, &c.

L E T.

LETTER XXX.

To the marshal de NOAILLES. 1758.

A LAS! you were in the right, marshal; that has unfortunately happened to the count of Clermont, which every one foresaw. He was said to be brave and to love glory, like all the Bourbons; but to be no general. The truth was told, and the event has justified the public opinion. The king of Prussia, learning his nomination to command our army, is reported to have said that France must be in great want of generals, since choice had been made of an ecclesiastic. The count of Charolois, who knows mankind, and knew his brother, said to him at his departure for Germany: *Ab! brother, you had better been saying your breviary.* The hint was good: but unfortunately for himself and us, he would not improve it. It is even rumored that he was rioting with his friends in his tent, when the enemy's approach was announced to him; that he treated the report as ridiculous, though he heard
the

the cannon whizzing about his ears; and that he got up from table with his brave friends only in order to take flight. This is doubtless a gibe on the poor prince, and that can never be true, which is so unlikely. It is impossible a prince of the blood should be so dastardly and so base as to dishonor himself thus and his country for mere merri-ment's sake. I must own to you, marshal, we begin to dread the event of the war. We are every where beaten, and our first victories serve only to augment the sense of our present disgraces; just as a rich man who falls into penury, suffers doubly when he recollects how prosperous he has been. The scourge of war is peculiarly dreadful to the vanquished; the funds fail us, the people lose spirit, and are miserable. War does more mischief in France in three years, than peace does good in twenty. Yet here are we engaged, and, though we have a very bad game, we must play out the party. The cursed point of honor which governs the world, has as powerful an ascendant over princes as over private men; but it is infinitely more fatal in the quarrels of nations than

than in those of families. It is deplorable for us that your age denies you to act: dear marshal, give us at least some advice, and prevent our ruin, &c.

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LETTER XXXI.

To the duke of BOUILLON. 1759.

I BEG of you to believe that I shall always make it my duty and pleasure to oblige you: but I will have no thanks. What little services I can do, I do with good will: I owe them to merit, and when I do but pay my debts, nobody is beholden to me.

In the midst of our calamities, our ministers want to strike a bold stroke. It is a scheme of the old marshal, who is, you know, very fertile in projects: I wish that this time he may be luckier than heretofore. The enterprise will be noble, but perhaps rash. Lewis XIV. set the example, and repented it: God grant that Lewis XV. may not repent also. Be this as it may, the thing is resolved, and the fleet preparing. Do you think your relation, the great and unfortunate prince Charles-Edward, loves us enough still to expose himself to make a second visit to the English. The expedition is dangerous, but great, and worthy of him. His
name,

name, his reputation, his merit and his valor would give us much to hope. Mean and jealous men are busy to rumor, that he has no pastime but drinking and playing mad pranks at Bouillon. But mean and jealous men deserve no credit, as I have more than once experienced. If that prince grows tired of retreat and obscurity, here is perhaps the last opportunity he will have of changing his fortune. Sound dextrously his mind, see how he stands affected towards us, and whether he persists in his resolution of being no more, as he called it, *the scarecrow of the English*. As he has taken a chaplain of the church of England, and seems to have entirely abjured the pope, his name would no longer be such a bugbear, and perhaps he might be beheld with a better eye than formerly: at least he has removed one powerful plea. The first time you come hither, and it would need to be soon, you will be talked to more at large. I am always, my lord-duke, with the sincerest attachment, &c.

P. S.

P. S. I pray you will present my most respectful compliments to my lady-dutchess. Do you still love her as much as she deserves? When shall I have the pleasure of embracing her?

VOL. I. E L E T-

P. S.

LETTER XXXII.

To Mr. DUCLOS, *secretary of the French academy.*

YOU have made me a fine present, sir; and I am much obliged to you for it. Your little book is a golden one; being an excellent picture of an original whom I hate and despise. You are happy to know the world but as a philosopher, and to be a mere spectator in it. If the academy please to pay any regard to my recommendation, I shall take the liberty of proposing to it a man whom I highly esteem, who has dutifully served the king, and has got himself a fair name in literature. A place among you, gentlemen, is the *garter* of men of letters: they all aspire to it, though few obtain or deserve it. He whom I recommend to you, deserves it beyond contradiction; and I expect from your justice that he shall obtain it.

I am, &c.

L E T-

LETTER XXXIII.

To the duke of BROGLIO.

March, 1759.

MY lord-duke, the king and the nation have great obligations to you: your victory gives us breath, and lets in a ray of hope amid the astonishing calamities which burst upon France from the four corners of the world. Prince Ferdinand has seen then at Berghen that we still have men, who know how to fight and vanquish. The important service you have done the king, will not remain unrewarded. He is vastly pleased with your conduct; the people are in high spirits, and for my part, I shall serve you with my whole power through justice and inclination. You are of a family, that has produced more than one great man; you imitate the same examples, and will go yet farther. I thank you much for the narrative you sent me; it is charming in matter and in manner. The old marshal says that you fight and write like Cæsar. All our marshals are jealous; and that is

your

your highest encomium. Indeed they ought to be so: it has never proved their lot to beat the enemy, and above all, such an enemy as prince Ferdinand, with an army inferior by one third. We particularly admire the wisdom of your conduct after the victory, in order to secure you the advantages of it. Battles are won every day, but not every day are they made the best of. You have therefore set the French an example of valor and conduct, and we are delighted to owe to you the united favor. I beg, my lord-duke, to be counted in the number of your friends, and pray that God may give us many men like you.

I am, &c.

L E T.

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L E T T E R XXXIV.

To the lady of the marshal de CONTADES.

August, 1759.

THE misfortunes that pour one after another upon our poor country, strike the whole nation down; but me by my situation they afflict doubly. Methinks I feel them twice, because I have often a hand in the choice of the men, and am almost always disappointed. The people in their unjust and extravagant spleen, go so far as to accuse me of selling to the enemy the blood and glory of the nation. I forgive them, but I forgive not so easily those who by their wretched conduct throw them into despair. This dreadful defeat at Minden is the most fatal check we have yet received in the course of the war. I am very sorry both on your account and my own, that it should have been Mr. de Contades who was there. Every mortal spoke well of him; every where were extolled his valor and his talents. I dropt a hint in his favor, and he set out with a confidence which I

partook, but which has been sadly mistaken. A billet is handed about that prince Ferdinand wrote on the eve of the battle, to Freitag, a partisan of his army. It was shown me as follows: "I give
 " the French battle to-morrow. If a
 " single equipage escape, you shall an-
 " swer it with your head." This billet manifests that the prince was sure of his victory, and that he made no great account of his enemy. Accordingly he won a complete victory, all the equipages and ammunition have been taken, and here are we almost without an army: all is lost, our very honor.

I neither condemn nor approve any one: warlike affairs are not my province: I only complain to a friend. I wish with all my heart, that our marshal could clearly justify his conduct; which were, I fear, a very hard task, &c.

L E T.

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LETTER XXXV.

To the marshal de BELLISLE.

I AM much affected by the catastrophe of poor Thurot: his family has been recommended to me, and, notwithstanding the misery of the times, I shall do my best to console it for the loss of that brave man, who merited a better fate. He wrought wonders with three little frigates, and kept the British fleet at bay upwards of a twelvemonth. I have a notion that had he had the command of the Brest-squadron, things would have taken another turn. He lived and died a hero; the English themselves feared and admired him. This is enough for his glory; but it is not enough for the glory of France. He was the last hope of our marine, and unfortunately he is no more. I repeat it, I will take care of his family. Great men are scarce; we should honor their memory, and so invite others to become such. Would I had no other care than that of doing good! it is the only one suited or pleasing to me. Your department, marshal, is to guide

the helm of the state in the heart of the storm. The management grows daily more difficult. Save us from shipwreck: it is all we dare hope or demand.

I have read over the memorial upon the new impost, and believe there are good things in it: but it is obscure, and not sufficiently particular. I shall talk to you again about it. Meantime,

I am, &c.

L E T.

LETTER XXXVI.

To the duke of RICHELIEU.

YOU have written me a very odd letter, and your conduct has some time been still odder. You have the weakness to be jealous of a woman: but I ask you what right you have to be so. You believe yourself capable of reigning under the king's name, and nobody believes so but yourself. Yet you find me always, you say, in your way; and I am the only person who stop the progress of your elevation. My lord, lay your hand on your heart, and hear me: learn of a woman to be true and moderate.

I have some small interest, and have always employed it to serve those I thought worthy. Often, I own, I have had the misfortune to deceive myself, and to take minions of ambition for persons of merit. You are not therefore the only one of the number, but you are the only one who have been basely un-

grateful, and who have arrogated to your personal merit the favors which you owed to the goodness or weakness of others. Were I as powerful as you pretend, I might have punished the insults I have received from you; and I still might. Yet you have kept all your places; you have obtained new ones; you have had great commands, and you have still. If I be so potent, I am not then vindictive, as you say; and if I be vindictive, I am not then so potent; since you have preserved your favor and your employments, and since you dare with impunity to cabal against me: bring yourself off, if you can. You loudly accuse me of ingratitude: but, my lord-duke, give me leave to tell you that I owe you nothing. Besides, had I to you as great obligations as you pretend, the preservation of your favor at court would suffice to prove me grateful. I know what obligations you mean: but a man who has ever so little respect for himself, instead of availing himself of them, ought to blush at them. I long have blushed for you, and desire to repent for myself. Such are my sentiments, upon which I beg
you

you may regulate your conduct, recommending to you to become (if possible) reasonable, just, and modest, &c.

I have been madam de Lamoignon, who
I gave me the loss for nothing and one
for you. I cancelled her for being your
friend, and for desiring to be mine. In
truth, my fair counsellor, you have made
me a mistake: I am not a woman, I am
a man. I am not a woman, I am a man.
I am not like the rest. You have, with all
the respect of our sex, all the merit of a
great man, and for that particularly it is
that I love you.
The camp of madam de Lamoignon is
strange. How! carried off in two days
by a grey fever! Her secretaries have
lost the abundance of tears. How
I have been the witness of such a sight.
I have seen the women run now and
the wish to know that there is something
upon earth. One brings into the world
hand and foot, and so it will be in the
next thirty years; after which a woman
is no longer good for any thing. I am
a man.

LETTER XXXVII.

To the countess of BASCHI:

I HAVE seen madam de Luffac, who gave me one kiss for herself and one for you. I caressed her for being your friend, and for deigning to be mine. In truth, my fair countess, you have handsome friends: beauty seeks beauty. This seldom happens among women; but you are not like the rest. You have, with all the graces of our sex, all the merit of a gentleman; and for that particularly it is that I love you.

The death of madam de Crussol is strange. How! carried off in two days by a puny fever. Her sweethearts have doubtless shed abundance of tears. How frightened fine women must now be! I see with sorrow that there is nought lasting upon earth. One brings into the world a handsome face, and lo! it wrinkles in less than thirty years; after which a woman is no longer good for any thing. This
grieves

grieves me: let us talk of something else. Do you know that next to the pleasure of seeing you, or of writing to you, one of the greatest to me at present is reading. Behold how tastes change: I could not read at eighteen. My favorite author is Voltaire: he is an enchanting fellow, who always pleases, and persuades when he will. I do not believe any man can have more wit, more eloquence, or more humanity. Have you read his *Scotch-woman*? Do you know the tender Lindana, the unfortunate Montrose, the generous Murray, and the scoundrel Frélon? It is all charming. I cried heartily. That rascal Frélon, had I had him near me, I would have spit in his face: he is a frightful character. I am amazed that Voltaire should produce so fine things at his age, that he should be so gay, so good-humored; for age is generally cross and peevish. All the old phyzzes that I have known, were sour, captious, morose; never laughed, and above all hated young people. Fancying this a natural effect of age, I feared almost as much to become ridiculous in mind as in person. But the example of Mr. de Voltaire

taire cheers me, by showing that it is the fault of the man, and not of age: seldom is it endeavored to grow old with grace. I would not answer that I shall be chearful, but I shall strive to be content and resigned: Yet between ourselves, I take this to be harder for a woman than for a man.

To return to the *Scotchwoman* (for I am in the chattering vein): if you have read her, read her over again, and you will find new beauties; after which put up a prayer for the preservation of the author, who is a very good christian, whatever the ignorant or the jealous may say.

But now I talk of christians, do you know that the young marchioness of Perquigni has washed off her red, and muffles up her alabaster. She was yesterday at the king's chapel, beauteous and modest as an angel, and prayed to God with a devotion which provoked the men, and pleased the women proportionably: it is one formidable rival fewer.

I embrace you tenderly, my dear countess; you see by the length of my letter how extendedly I love you, &c.

L E T-

LETTER XXXVIII.

To the same.

AS I have the spleen and head-ake, I set about writing to you: I have ever found it a specific. There passed yesterday in the circle, a scene which I will be the first to rehearse to you. Present was a marshal of France, who lost not long ago a battle and his honor. However he looks fiercer and more self-satisfied than before: there are some fronts of brass. The dutchess of S.* who never loses an opportunity of making merry at the cost of others, turned towards the mother of the hero, and said to her gravely: "Alas! madam, how did you receive the news of your son's disgrace? Did you sleep? Did you eat? Did you hide your head for shame? Were you fit to sink into the ground?" All this was said with the tone you know. The marshal, who is a philosopher, would not

* St. Simon.

quarrel with a woman : but he went and complained to the king, who fell a laughing and asked him if he was afraid of a woman's tongue.

I shall take care of little Valbelle, because she is pretty and good-natured, and because you recommend her : however, I must tell you by the way that I have many daughters, of whom I am not the mother, and that times are hard. But after all, one must be doing some good, and I shall do what I can. The splendor of the court at first dazzled the little creature, as proves the case of all that see it for the first time : I had the same weakness, but have been long cured of it. I hope the girl will soon behold with indifference what she must be allowed to admire a few moments. But if the folly last with her two months, I shall dismiss her as unworthy your friendship and mine. Farewel, my dear ; the poor marquis will make you his compliments whether I will or no, and perhaps they are mere compliments : but I embrace you with all possible tenderness, as also your little daughter ; I wish she may be like her mother, &c.

L E T-

LETTER XXXIX.

To the marquis of BEAUFORT. 1760.

WITH much pleasure have I received your letter and fine memorial upon your negotiations in Spain. That great stroke of politics promises better than was imagined. After all, it is the interest of the house of Bourbon in general, as it is the sole resource of France in particular. This *family-compact* will astonish the English: but the business is not only to astonish them; they must also be made to tremble. The plan is found to be admirably concerted in all its parts. The king of Portugal, who is the first subject of the English, and their tributary, will be compelled to declare himself; and, happen what will, this will produce a diversion which cannot but be advantageous to France, as embarrassing for her enemies. We here admire the intelligence and penetration with which you conduct that great affair, notwithstanding the numberless difficulties you find in the irresolution of the council of Spain and in the English faction. The king's favor
and

and the general esteem of your country will be your reward. Often a good negotiator is more useful to a state than a good general, and makes shift to repair the injuries of fortune. I beg to pay my civilities to our friend : we hope to owe our safety to him. Preserve yourself for the service of your sovereign, and for the good of your nation. I am, &c.

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LETTER XL.

To the marquis of CASTRIES.

November, 1760.

I Thank you for your letter, and above all for your victory. That little affair you have had with the prince of Brunswick is some consolation in the torrent of calamities which burst upon us from all quarters. The king is greatly pleased; and for my part, I am charmed that it is to you we have so much obligation: you have not disappointed us, as so many have done. The prodigies of valor which your troops performed on this occasion, shew that the French want only a good commander to fight well. Wonders are told of the brave regiment of Auvergne, which has therefore suffered the most. The prince of Brunswick is always to be feared, and his retreat is not that of a frightened man. There are folks who pretend that you might have cut his little army to pieces: but I believe that those closet-warriors are neither just nor reasonable.

Farewel,

Farewel, marquis; you are an admirable correspondent: send us always such tidings: we stand in no small need of them. Every body loved you; now every body esteems you; and I know one who will do her best to work out your fortune, while you shall work out your glory. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XLI.

To the count d'ARL.

November 6, 1760.

I KNOW not whether the death of old king George will occasion any change in our affairs: I believe we shall always have very little to hope, and very much to fear. The English government differs widely from others. It is the people that make war rather than the king: princes die, but the general spirit subsists, and that spirit is against us. The new king is very young; he must hate Pitt as much as did his grandfather: but that minister will keep his post in spite of him, because he has the popular favor. The only means of procuring us peace were to vanquish: victories are more efficacious for that purpose than the most masterly negotiations. You say that the hearts of the Hollanders are for our enemies: that is amazing, but possible. It is because the English are annoying their trade, carrying off their ships, and giving them al-
ready

ready to understand that the said modest English are aspiring to the general and exclusive commerce of Europe? But in short, it is the Orange-party that wishes us ill: the states are for us; the rabble is nothing, it hates and loves without justice and without reason. The states general appear much provoked against the English on account of their piracies; do you think their indignation may go so far as a rupture? Mark, learn every thing; continue to serve the king faithfully, and to do honor to those who esteem you.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XLII.

To the duke of WIRTEMBERG. 1760.

WITH equal pleasure and respect did I receive the letter with which your highness honoured me. I admire your generous resolution, and the goodness with which you are pleased to impart it to me. You embrace the cause of the empire and ours with a zeal, which will I hope, bring you equal benefit and glory. Your troops will be treated like ours; and, if they share their toils and dangers, they will also share their honor and advantages. But, I believe, my lord-duke, that before you set out for the army, you might not do amiss to come and see us at Paris. I here a thousand things, a thousand details better settled by word than by writing, or by negotiators. Our ministers hope that you will bring back into our army that fortune, which has been hitherto so adverse to us; I hope so too: good troops and a good general will not be easily vanquished. I am, &c.

LET.

LETTER XLIII.

To the duke of BELLISLE.

IN truth your projectors are admirable fellows; there is nothing impossible for them: they find means for every thing; and I doubt not but, if the king had a mind for the porcelain-tower of Nankin, or for the diamond-vineyard of the great Mogul, those gentlemen would find the thing perfectly easy, and lay down a plan for transporting them to Paris. The memorial in question is a masterpiece of impertinence, and can have had no birth but in the inhabitant of a mad-house. It is a good joke to see a man propose seriously that, to clear the debts of a state, nothing more would be requisite but for the king to turn bankrupt every fifteen years. Did the king commit one bankruptcy pursuant to this system, I verily believe it would be put out of his power to commit a second. It were as good to propose going to rob on the highway every fifteen years. The fellow can neither have honesty nor understanding. I recollect another project, which was addressed to me
from

from Holland last year. and which I took at first for a paltry sneer upon the distress of the kingdom: but I learned afterwards that it was the offspring of a madman who was dying for want at Amsterdam. He pretended to supply the king with two hundred annual millions by a single tax, and without trampling down the people. It was the simplest thing in the world. The business was only to publish an edict obliging every subject to repeat every day a *rosary*, in default of which each should pay five-pence for each omission. As the French are not devotees, said the author, they will be almost daily in forfeit; which will produce immense sums. He ended by asking a place for his pains, and a place was offered him in the Bicetre*. The great point is to find money, and not to form projects. Every new controuler-general promises wonders; but he finds himself embarrassed at the very first step of performance; and we are obliged to get rid of him in order to replace him by another, to whom a third perhaps as quickly succeeds. The finances are in dreadful disorder; the people, starving,

* An hospital of lunatics, &c. at Paris.

murmur; and go abroad to seek a better country. Our credit is sunk; the English are successful, and we are without hope. I do not believe that the war of the succession was more fatal than this. What shall be done to save France? We would need peace: but how to obtain it, and how continue the war? The king's good heart suffers cruelly in these public calamities; could there be no way, my lord-duke, to relieve him by relieving his people? I should be glad to see you: I have a thousand things to say to you, &c.

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LETTER XLIV.

To the countess of BASCHI. 1760.

I AM very sorry, yet I cannot forbear laughing a little, at what has befallen the poor duke of Wirtemberg, whom we saw so brilliant at Paris last winter. He has smarted for his rashness. When he sold the king his twelve thousand men, he stipulated that they should form a separate camp and body; which was granted him. The king of Prussia understanding that he put himself into the pay of France, after having been in that of the empress, sent to prince Ferdinand of Brunswick the following billet: "The duke of Wirtemberg is, they say, with the French: "the hereditary prince my nephew would "do well to give him a little lesson." He has just received that lesson, without being a bit the wiser for it. Marshal Broglio wrote to him after his disaster to invite him to join his army, and no longer to encamp apart, for fear of the consequences. Upon his refusal, the French general received orders to send back that troublesome and useless friend into his own country.

But drop we the duke of Wirtemberg. I have been reading *the Russian at Paris*, and find he reasons not amiss for a Russian. He is much in the right; France is no other than a vast grave, where are still to be found the epitaphs of the great men she has produced, and whose race is almost extinct. Here is now nothing but meanness, cowardly artifice, childish intrigue, impertinent books, and extreme misery. O France! what is become of thy glory? You mock me, madam, with your comedy of *philosophers*: it is a gross and spiritless libel; I had great difficulty to get to the end of it, and am amazed the magistrates should have permitted the representation of personal satyr. But who, pray is this Palissot that sets up for the protector of religion and virtue against men of letters, that are accounted religious and virtuous? He is a fellow of sorry character. It has been attempted to present Mr. Palissot to me as the wit in fashion; but I refused to see him. I had as lief, God forgive me, see the illustrious M. Frenon. Have you been at Dorigni's? Is the count always in good humor? When shall I see you? Do you still love me? There are women's questions for you. Farewel, you know that *Femina cœsa garrula e loquace*.

L E T

LETTER XLV.

To the same. 1760.

YOU ask me how I employ myself when I have neither the head-ache nor bad company. I write, madam; I blot paper like so many other folks. I take notes of my singular fortune, and of the things I have seen still more singular. This to me seems a rational occupation for a woman almost past the age of pleasing, nor in the least solicitous about it. I shall tell many truths disagreeable to some folks; but I will neither tell a lie, nor flatter fools or knaves. Yet these memoirs will not see the light till I shall see it no more. So shall I shun the reproaches, or puny resentment of the little low hateful fellows, of whom I make mention in my true history: for the dead laugh at the living. But you, madam, what do you in your leisure-hours, which are pretty frequent? for you are at no loss how to live with yourself. Do you read the charming hermit * of Fernay? Do you think of me?

* Voltaire.

Do you pray to God for those who love you? All those occupations are good and laudable; and therefore I guess them to be yours.

I am ashamed that young persons should be daily setting me the example of flight from the world, without my having the courage to imitate them: I despise it sincerely, but I could wish to do more. The fair countess of Nueville has all of a sudden rushed into deep devotion. She hears prayers four times a day, communicates every week, and never casts an eye upon a man: she sees none but her husband and her confessor! I honor her resolution and her courage: but I am afraid she will not persevere, and it were great pity. Let us also become converts, but without noise or show, and without any sort of affectation. Farewel, my dearest: if this hint do not please you, give a better.

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LETTER XLVI.

To Mr. BERRIER. 1761.

THE French are an admirable people. How happy is a king to have such subjects! We are going then to have a powerful marine, a voluntary present of the nation. I am surprized and enchanted at this zeal which animates all ranks to furnish ships for the public service. They who pretend that the patriot-flame burns brisker in republics than in monarchies, have only to quote me the instance of a free state, where private persons have supplied thirty ships of the line, without so much as being desired, if they would have me to believe them. The king is melted: never did he so much love his people. Yet I dread this succour's coming too late: however it shall not be lost for that, and will serve on another occasion. The English hate the French with all their heart, and the French detest them with like sincerity. They are always at war, at least intentionally; and when they lay down their arms through weariness or exhaustion, it is in order to take

them up again with greater fury. But, sir, might not something be attempted for a moment? England is entirely dismantled: her fleets pursue us to both the Indies. Might not the opportunity be improved to make a second attempt, as fruitless perhaps as the former? This has run in my head some days past; and if it is a dream, it is at least the dream of a true Frenchwoman. Do in it as you will, or as you can; I shall speak of it to nobody, not even to the grand senior. Madam de Carouge craves an employment for her son; I believe he deserves it; it is a family where courage is hereditary, and which has always done faithful service. As for experience, it will come; he is young: I love young people; they are docible, and delight to inform themselves. For the old, they are intractable when they once have taken their set: they are insupportable in business as in love.

What you call my favor is a small matter: it is not that which supports you, but your own merit: to it you owe every thing; mind that. Sometimes I am attended to, often contradicted; sometimes I give good counsels, often are bad ones laid to my charge. But, in general, be sure that my power is much limited, and
I should

I should not be sorry were it more so, that I might live only to myself. Meantime I love and serve with all my power those who faithfully serve their king and country. As you are of the number, it is impossible for me not to wish you well. Let your enemies and mine clamor on, and do you continue to render yourself worthy the esteem of their betters. I am, &c.

At this moment I have a letter from Mr. Paris familiarly demanding things impossible, though I had already told him that I had neither power nor inclination to give him. I pray you tell him I will not answer him. I will not answer him.

When once they have taken it into their heads that they support the cause of honor, they talk and act with a haughtiness which God cannot approve, and which is certainly indispensable to men. It is not for us to give orders to men.

LET-
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must be of all the most dutiful; for, if you will speak sense to celestial beings.

LETTER XLVII.

To the count of St. FLORENTIN.

DEAR count, I recommend to you a very hopeful young man. I love his protectors, and have great esteem for his family, where honor and abilities are in a manner natural. These motives would suffice to you to advance him: but for their operation it is necessary to make him known to you.

At this moment I have a letter from Mr. Paris, familiarly demanding things impossible, though I had already told him that I had neither power nor inclination to serve him, I pray you tell him so again: for I will not answer him. I admire the holy front of those gentlemen: when once they have taken it into their heads that they support the cause of heaven, they talk and act with a haughtiness which God cannot approve, and which is certainly insupportable to men. It is not favors they ask, but orders they give. I imagine, count, that your department must be of all the most disagreeable; for, if you will speak sense to ecclesiastics, they

they contradict you by a passage from the Bible: I am in pain to know whether that race of men be as necessary to the world as it is troublesome to it. True it is that we have authority in our hands; and this is what grieves them greatly: let us guard it with care, and make it feared, lest they make themselves feared in their turn, and subject the crown to the mitre.

But as to my young man, if you have nothing at present that may suit him, he will stay: I do not desire you to displace any one, or to do an injury to another in order to oblige me.

I am, &c.

L. E. T.

LETTER XLVIII.

*To the cardinal de BERNIS.**

YOUR situation touches me, though you have deserved it; and if I could change your fortune, I still would do it, as if you were worthy of it. But there are some things which I can neither ask nor obtain. Remember what you were some years ago: you were poor, but happy and amiable: your ambition and my kindness spoiled you. Scarce had you got into office, when the difference appeared between the knack of making little verses and the art of governing. The faults you daily committed in the most difficult of departments, grieved me: but I durst not believe you incapable, and I attributed to the want of experience what I ought to have attributed to the want of understanding. I hoped on, till it proved indispensable to dismiss you. You are not ignorant that I have

* Who had been ambassador at Vienna, and afterwards minister of state.

have personally much to complain of you : nevertheless, all my resentment confines itself to speak neither good nor ill of you. I kept the silence that became me; and, if you have at last fallen a sacrifice, it is not to me, but to the public. Yet talk we seriously : why do you so bitterly deplore your pretended disgrace? What have you lost? the uneasinesses and torments of ambition; and you have recovered rest and liberty with a great revenue and high dignities. You are unfortunate in one particular; which is, not to be sensible of your immediate happiness, and to regret the trouble, solicitude, and pain that attend the administration of public affairs. All these reflexions are just, though my heart does not taste them so truly as my head: and were I in your place, I should perhaps be as weak as yourself; but I should blush at my weakness, and tell it to nobody. I am ashamed to preach to you: it was rather from you that I ought to have expected animations to suffer patiently the vanities of the world and of grandeur.

To return to the subject of your letter, this is my resolution, which I shall never alter. I never shall oppose your
return,

[110]

return, or the favors that may be design-
ed you, and which you desire. But,
should that happen, do not take the
trouble of thanking me for them: for be
assured I shall have no share in them,
&c.

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LETTER XLIX.

To Mr. de Bussi.

WE immediately judged by Mr. Stanley's extravagant proposals, that the court of London was not seriously disposed to peace; and your dispatches confirm our opinion. Mr. Pitt is a quibbler, who treats not in earnest: he is but playing a farce. However we must carry it through, and prove the English in the wrong before all Europe, by exposing their ambition and disinclination to peace. Yet it is not doubted here that in the main they have almost as much need of it as we. Their debt is immense and daily increasing; soldiers and sailors begin to fail them; and I know not whether their credit, which is their sole support, will be able to stand much longer: properly speaking, our wars with that nation are mere mercantile wars, and so much the harder to terminate, because the spirit of commerce will admit no rival. A thousand individuals of London, who make great fortunes by the ruin and massacre of their very countrymen,

trymen, could wish the cruel game to last for ever. They can easily purchase the ministry and parliament in a country where every thing is to be sold; so that, when the merchants have declared war on the royal exchange, it must be declared at St. James's within half a year or a twelvemonth after. Such is the great obstacle to peace, till the king of England shall have ministers of honor enough to wish the public weal, and to despise the clamors and money of those who enrich themselves by the desolation of the people.

You say your situation at London is very disagreeable: I do not doubt it. You are exposed to the insults of a brutal people, and to the contempt of an arrogant minister. We here set you the example of patience: suffer generously for your king and country: and earn the true glory of a citizen. In your negotiations conduct yourself with modesty without meanness: haughtiness is ridiculous in the vanquished. Whatever be the success of this attempt, endeavor above all to do honor at once to yourself and your friends. Present my most humble respects to that personage who has much power and good-will towards us.

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Concert measures with that friend; make us more such; preponderate, if possible, by the weight of the worthy, the faction of low and interested men, who prefer the war that enriches them, to the peace that enriches only their country.

I am, &c.

L E T-

LETTER L.

To the lady of the marshal BROGLIO.

1761.

MADAM, your letter does me honor, and your grief touches me greatly; but it is impossible for me to relieve you. The king is very angry, and I believe that the marshal is not blameless. He would vanquish alone, and he has been vanquished. His antagonist defends himself stoutly; he has a letter in his pocket that seems to justify him. Yet am I ready to allow any thing in favor of the marshal: he is brave, he understands war perfectly; he is said to be our only captain whom the enemy fears and regards, and the only one who can make us forget count Saxe, who was the tutelar angel of France. Thus his glory is secure, and indemnifies him abundantly for the loss of favor. Many are therefore the grounds of consolation, madam, till such time as fortune shall change. The king is gracious, he has much esteem for the marshal; and you have every thing

thing to hope. You must let the storm
 blow over, which cannot last; and you
 will see happier days. In this country
 merit is not always forgot, and it is always
 wanted.

I am, &c.

L E T.

LETTER LI.

To the marshal de SOUBISE. 1761.

I YESTERDAY saw the jolly German prince*, who mentioned you with great esteem: he doubtless knew he did me pleasure. He owns that you have not always been fortunate in war, but is convinced you have always deserved to be so. The famous Turenne lost battles: take comfort. The king however is very melancholy: this constant train of ill success in the most just and necessary war that ever was, sensibly distresses his paternal heart. He suffers from whatever his people suffer: he signs no edict of impost but with a groan. One must have seen him in these times of humiliation and adversity, to judge with propriety of him: he has a fine and generous soul. Right is for us, and heaven for our enemies: adore we the deep designs of providence.

Be

* — of Nassau-Saerbruck.

Be this how it may, the last hand has been put to what is called a masterpiece of politics, the *family-compact*; and, what France would not have dared either to ask or to hope in happier times, she has obtained in the midst of her disgraces. The French are now Spaniards, and the Spaniards are French. Now is it peculiarly, that *there are no more pyrenees*, as said Lewis XIV. Much is expected from this stroke of state, and the English will not be over pleased with it. They will be obliged to separate their force to make head against the Spaniards, who have a very fine fleet, a good army and good officers. It is resolved to compel the Portuguese to declare themselves: their neutrality is more prejudicial to our interest than an open war, by the succours of every kind they minister to the English, to whom they prove most humble servants. It is comical to see a king of fifty in tuition, with a phantom of authority, reigning without glory and without liberty. A nation, who has any sense of honor, must live or die independant, and not render itself to no purpose a ridiculous and contemptible slave. The Spanish minister behaves with much zeal and ardor. However, it is thought that

that Portugal will refuse to forsake the English: the commercial interests of the two nations are so linked and complicated, that a rupture is regarded almost impossible. Wherefore the Spaniards are seriously preparing to make a voyage to Lisbon; and France, notwithstanding her urgent necessities, will not be able to avoid sending a body of troops thither. Such, marshal, is our actual situation, still fearing a little, but hoping much. I hope too that you shall be employed this year: depend upon your friends, &c.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.